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WRINKLE-RESISTANT FABRICS FOR SUMMER DRESSES

A radio dialogue between Miss Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, and Mr. Wallace Kadderly, Office of Information, broadcast Thursday, June 9, 1938, in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, by the National Broadcasting Company and a network of 93 associate radio stations.

---oooOooo---

WALLACE KADDERLY:

Here is Ruth Van Deman, with more news---from a USDA Bureau---the Bureau of Home Economics. This news is about tests on fabrics treated with the new wrinkle-proof finishes.

RUTH VAN DEMAN:

Watch out, Wallace, how you use that word proof.

KADDERLY:

That's right. Resistant is the word. I remember your textile people picked me up on that the other day.

VAN DEMAN:

It's just that they think wrinkle-proof sounds as though these fabrics won't wrinkle at all. And of course they will some.

KADDERLY:

Crease-resistant then. Maybe that's better.

VAN DEMAN:

I think it is. This resinous finish, manufacturers are putting on cloth, only keeps it from creasing or wrinkling so much or so easily.

KADDERLY:

Well, we want to use the word to fit the service that's reasonable to expect. And now what I'd like to know, and I imagine what women who're buying these materials would like to know is - will this wrinkle-resistant finish wear off? Or will it last till the fabric wears out?

VAN DEMAN:

That is the question of course. And here's the answer---in these fabrics you saw Margaret Furry testing over in the laboratory the other day.

KADDERLY:

I thought I recognized them.

VAN DEMAN:

In all she tried out 17 different kinds - cotton, linen, and rayon summer dress materials, to find whether they keep their wrinkle-resistant finish after washing and ironing. I believe you thought she was putting them through a pretty stiff test.

KADDERLY:

Very stiff and very scientific. Outlined, I think she said, by the American Society for Testing Materials.

(over)

VAN DEMAN:

I believe so. Anyway she washed the fabrics five times, for 30 minutes every time, in hot soapy water with some sal soda added. (Which of course is much more drastic washing than we'd recommend for colored materials at home.) After each washing she rinsed the materials and ironed them while they were still damp. I think you saw her comparing the new fabrics with the samples she'd washed and ironed, after she'd tested them for wrinkling in the flexometer. I brought a few along as exhibit A, B, and C.

KADDERLY:

Exhibit A here looks as smooth and fresh as new.

VAN DEMAN:

That's a blue rayon with a weave like linen. Try wrinkling it, if you can.

KADDERLY:

I can't. It bounces right back at me, as though it had springs in it. I can't even make a crease in it.

VAN DEMAN:

That's partly the natural way of rayon. Even though this one lost more of its finish in the washing and ironing than some of the cottons and linens, it will probably stay smoother and freer of wrinkles. Miss Furry found that all the fabrics lost some of their wrinkle resistance. But they all kept enough to make them very much better for summer dresses than the same kinds of fabrics that haven't been given a wrinkle-resistant finish. Look at these two linens - with and without.

KADDERLY:

This one's all in a pucker.

VAN DEMAN:

That's just plain linen untreated, as it always used to come. A linen dress of that would have to be pressed every time you wore it. Try the flexural resilience on this piece - - -

KADDERLY:

The what?

VAN DEMAN:

Flexural resilience! Don't you remember, that's what you test for with the flexometer?

KADDERLY:

Well, if my thumb and finger will pass as a flexometer - - -

VAN DEMAN:

A very good substitute - - -

KADDERLY:

This linen, I'd say, holds its own very well.

VAN DEMAN:

That's the one with the wrinkle-resistant finish. And its been washed in hot water and ironed five times. I think that about answers your question, Wallace, as to whether these finishes last.

KADDERLY:

Yes, ma'am. And the answer seems to be yes.

VAN DEMAN:

As part of the tests, Miss Furry measured the shrinkage on these fabrics. And she gave them the standard light test in the fadeometer to see whether the colors were fast.

KADDERLY:

How'd they show up?

VAN DEMAN:

Those that had the best wrinkle resistance shrank the least - only about a third of an inch to the yard.

KADDERLY:

That's not much of a shrink, is it?

VAN DEMAN:

Well within the definition of a pre-shrunk material. But some that had no finish shrank as much as an inch to the yard lengthwise and three inches crosswise. Apparently the manufacturers who used the non-wrinkle finish were careful to have the goods well shrunken first.

KADDERLY:

And were their dyes colorfast?

VAN DEMAN:

For the most part, yes. After being exposed 40 hours to a bright carbon arc lamp - the laboratory substitute for sunlight, most of them had not faded so you could notice it. Miss Furry hasn't finished her tests on seam slippage yet. But that's something all of us who buy dresses or yard goods are very keen to know. And we'd like to know before, not after the seams begin to grin and show their teeth. I'll have more to say on that later.

KADDERLY:

We're glad of this report on the new wrinkle-resistant fabrics. And just one more question. A moment ago you said that this washing test Miss Furry gave these fabrics was much more drastic than you'd recommend for home laundering.

VAN DEMAN:

Very much so, yes.

KADDERLY:

What do you recommend?

VAN DEMAN:

Lukewarm water --- neutral soap --- drying in the shade. It's all in the bulletin on home laundering.

KADDERLY:

And that's available to anybody who wants it?

VAN DEMAN:

Oh yes. And the one on Stain Removal. They make a good pair for ready reference.

KADDERLY:

Let me just repeat that. Farm and Home Hour friends, if any of you want the bulletins on Home Laundering and Removing Stains from Fabrics, drop a post card to Miss Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, Washington, D. C. And thank you, Ruth. We'll be looking for you next Thursday.

VAN DEMAN:

And I hope I won't have a wrinkle in my dress--

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